LET'S DO A LITTLE GRAFTING

By Jimmie Monroe

Not the unlawful kind. We don't know anything about that. The law would have us in no time if we tried.

Before we start lets not be fooled by the numbering on the photos in the center of this issue. The editor goofed. When laying out the copy for the printers he had in mind the four pictures on the left as being the first four steps and the four pictures on the right as the four last steps. Mr. George Wright, president of the James E. Hendry Chapter, took care of the printing and the photography work and the Executive Secretary didn't tell him in what order to number the prints. Thanks, George, you did a fine job. Lay the numbering at the door of Mr. Monroe, he is the one that goofed.

First of all why do we graft? Several reasons. Some varieties will not root. Others will not grow on their own root well. We graft hibiscus for the same reasons that citrus is budded. To supply the Plant with a good sturdy root system able to take the conditions the plant will be subjected to.

Before going into the detailed steps of grafting lets talk a little about wood, rootstock, and other things. The author likes wood about pencil size to work with. As near to the size of the rootstock as possible. Soft green wood can be grafted successfully, however. The cion should be as freshly cut as possible. Wood has been shipped from as far away as South Africa and made to live. If wrapped in plastic to preserve the natural moisture the cion can be shipped with ease. Also cion wood can be refrigerated for some time if left in the plastic packaging. The fresher, the easier the take however.

The rootstock should be well rooted and growing vigorously. The author prefers rootstock in quart cans. Some nurserymen like the rootstock to be in gallons. If it is grown in gallons there is no need to re-pot before sale. Both the stock and cion should

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be free of insects and disease.

Before one starts there are several things that must be on hand. Some like other items but this is what the author wants on hand:

1. A good SHARP grafting or budding knife.
2. Pruning shears.
3. Rubber binding strips.
4. Melted wax and brush.
5. Nursery tags.
6. Plastic bags.
7. Some kind of disinfectant. Clorox is fine.

This is in addition to the rootstock and cion wood.

A general thumbnail sketch of grafting and then we will go into detail. The cion comes from the plant one wants to propagate. We want to fasten the cion into the rootstock in such a manner that it will heal, and grow. Then the top part of the rootstock is cut off and the only thing left is the cion growing out of the old root system.

We are ready to refer to the photos now. Number one shows three pieces of cion wood cut with the wedge shape cut ready to be inserted in a slash in the rootstock. You will note the bud near the bottom of the cion on the left. It is a good idea to leave a bud in this area if possible. Sometimes this is the only one that will grow. The middle piece shows the flat side of the cut and the right piece shows the back part of the cut that will be toward the back of the union when finished. This two way wedge will bind in tighter when wrapped.

On each piece of cion wood one should leave at least three eyes. If the eyes are close together more than three will be fine. Sterilize the knife and make

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